

**To:** R8 GKM Leadership Team[R8\_GKM\_LeadershipTeam@epa.gov]; Hamilton, Karen[Hamilton.Karen@epa.gov]; Wall, Tom[Wall.Tom@epa.gov]; Loop, Travis[Loop.Travis@epa.gov]  
**Cc:** Grantham, Nancy[Grantham.Nancy@epa.gov]  
**From:** StClair, Christie  
**Sent:** Wed 5/18/2016 8:02:25 PM  
**Subject:** URGENT - Bloomberg (DDL 4:30 EST): Gardner legislation

Brian Dabbs of Bloomberg is asking:

1. Can you comment on Sen. Gardner's suggestion that EPA will not process emergency response actions committed after Oct. 31, 2015?
2. I know some payouts have been made, and Administrator McCarthy pointed to those during her testimony last month. How do you feel the agency has handled compensation requests as a whole? Are you making good progress? What else needs to be done to pay out proper requests?
3. Do you support long-term water quality monitoring of the Animas River?

Draft response is exactly what we plan to send Daily Caller but with an additional graph in yellow at the bottom on the conceptual monitoring plan.

Please respond quickly on this one, thanks!

Christie

#### **DRAFT RESPONSE**

EPA does not comment on proposed legislation.

EPA takes responsibility for the **cleanup of the** Aug. 5, 2015 Gold King Mine release. To date, EPA has:

- [REDACTED] Allocated \$2 million in funding to support states' and tribes' monitoring plans. Utah, New Mexico, Southern Ute Indian Tribe, Ute Mountain Ute Tribe, Navajo Nation, and Colorado are eligible and may apply those funds to spring monitoring and preparedness planning as well. Some entities have applied and some have not.
- [REDACTED] Agreed to contribute an additional \$625,000, which in combination with the prior \$2 million in funding, will enable states and tribes to fund a real-time water-quality monitoring alert system. This real-time monitoring would also serve to ensure successful coordination and implementation of notification and preparedness activities for communities downstream.
- [REDACTED] Provided \$197,792 to La Plata County through a pre-existing cooperative agreement with the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE). These funds were a reimbursement for the County's allowable removal response expenses related to the Gold King Mine release.
- [REDACTED] Provided \$220,667 to San Juan County/Town of Silverton through a pre-existing cooperative agreement with CDPHE. These funds were reimbursement for the county's and town's allowable removal response expenses related to the Gold King Mine release.
- [REDACTED] Provided an additional \$5,529 to San Juan County/Town of Silverton through a Superfund Cooperative Agreement awarded on April 1, 2016.
- [REDACTED] Provided an additional \$72,786 to La Plata County through a Superfund Cooperative Agreement awarded on April 1, 2016. EPA is in the process of evaluating additional expenses requested by La Plata County, and expects to reimburse additional allowable response costs under the cooperative agreement soon.
- [REDACTED] Provided \$2,471 to the City of Durango through a Superfund Cooperative Agreement awarded on April 1, 2016. EPA is in the process of evaluating additional expenses requested by the City of Durango and expects to reimburse additional allowable response costs under the cooperative agreement soon.
- [REDACTED] Provided \$71,571 to San Juan Basin Health through a pre-existing cooperative agreement with CDPHE and an additional \$969 through a Superfund Cooperative Agreement awarded on April 1, 2016.
- [REDACTED] Provided \$157,000 in funding through a cooperative agreement with Navajo Nation government agencies for costs incurred during the response to the August 2015 Gold King Mine release, and requested additional information from the Navajo Nation about remaining reimbursement requests to determine their eligibility under the EPA's response authorities and federal grant principles. These funds are in addition to more than \$1.1 million spent by the agency in response costs on the Navajo Nation immediately following the release.
- [REDACTED] Reimbursed the Southern Ute Indian Tribe \$116,372 for costs incurred during the response. EPA is in the process of evaluating additional expenses requested by the Southern Ute Indian Tribe and expects to reimburse additional allowable response costs.
- [REDACTED] Provided \$19,460 in funding through a cooperative agreement with Arizona for costs incurred during the response to the August 2015 Gold King Mine release. EPA is reviewing requests from Arizona for reimbursement of additional costs.
- [REDACTED] Allocated an additional \$159,900 of recertified tribal funds to the Southern Ute Indian Tribe to further support their water quality monitoring plans.

- Reimbursed the New Mexico Environment Department and other entities in the state for \$728,681 for costs incurred during the response. EPA is working with the New Mexico Environment Department to review additional requests for response costs following the state's request for an extension.

- Approved the agency's own monitoring plan for the Animas and San Juan rivers. The conceptual monitoring plan is designed to gather a robust set of scientific data to consistently evaluate river conditions over time and evaluate impacts to public health and the environment. Under the conceptual monitoring plan, EPA is examining water quality, sediment quality, biological community and fish tissue at 30 locations under a variety of flow and seasonal river conditions. The sampling locations are located within Colorado, Southern Ute Indian Reservation, New Mexico, Ute Mountain Ute Reservation, the Navajo Nation and Utah, spanning Cement Creek, the Animas and San Juan rivers, and the upper section of the San Juan arm of Lake Powell. Learn more about the plan here: <https://www.epa.gov/goldkingmine/us-epa-releases-monitoring-plan-evaluate-conditions-animas-and-san-juan-rivers>

**Christie St. Clair**

Office of Public Affairs

Environmental Protection Agency

Washington, DC

o: 202-564-2880

m: 202-768-5780